Q4 2010 Supplemental Answers Question 11a
Nebraska Broadband Planning
Quarterly Report – October 2010 through December 2010

1. **If the project received funding for broadband planning, please describe progress made against all goals, objectives, and milestones detailed in the approved project plan. Be sure to include a description of each major activity/milestone that you plan to complete and your current status.** (Answer below.)

The Nebraska Information Technology Commission Community Council (NITC), University of Nebraska - Lincoln (UNL), Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) and the AIM Institute are cooperatively leading the effort to address the broadband planning needs of Nebraska's communities. UNL is the fiscal agent for the planning part of the grant.

A number of activities were identified in the initial grant to identify barriers to the adoption of broadband and IT services, creating and facilitating local technology planning teams, and collaborating with broadband service providers to encourage broadband deployment and use. In the supplemental grant, activities were focused around three projects: capacity building, technical assistance and local planning. Following the NITA guidance and recent NTIA Webinar recommendation, the quarterly report will focus on the three project areas.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Internet Connectivity and Use in Nebraska: A Household Survey

Nebraskans were surveyed about their computer and Internet usage, challenges and desires for the future through a mail survey conducted in February and March 2010 by UNL. The survey mailed to 6,600 Nebraskans in February 2010 utilized the Dillman Total Design Method to achieve a 47% response rate.   The household names were obtained from a marketing firm. The survey included four separate mailings to the households using the State of Nebraska Public Service Commission letterhead.

The first report on Internet Connectivity and Use in Nebraska was released in June 2010. The report will be available at broadband.ne.gov by Quarter 2 2011. The report includes regional, education, income, age, gender, racial and ethnic group comparisons. Key findings identified include the following example:

> *Approximately four out of every five households (81%) in Nebraska has internet service. However, older persons, persons with lower household incomes, persons with lower education levels, households without children, and households in the nonmetropolitan areas of the state are the groups less likely to have Internet service in their home.*

The development of the questionnaire began in October 2009 and was finalized shortly after the broadband grant was awarded in January. Questions from the Pew Foundation and other national telecommunication surveys were used in order to compare results. A copy of the survey is attached.

4th Quarter 2010 Status Update: The initial household survey is completed as well as an initial analysis. During the 4th quarter, the results were presented to statewide organizations (i.e., Governor's Rural Development Conference) and other regional organizations. The purpose of these presentations has been to build awareness and interest into the broadband planning process. A draft summary focused on the "Use of and Satisfaction with Broadband Service at Home by Business Ownership and Telecommuting" was written. Summary will be released in Q1 2011.

Business Survey

Currently, 27 communities are now conducting additional business surveys in communities/regions using the Department of Economic Development Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program. The BR&E survey asks over 10 specific questions related to technology and broadband utilization. An additional survey will be sent to businesses in 2011 to gather more specific data. The first report will be released in the first quarter 2011 identifying preliminary benchmarks on technology adoption and usage

Businesses will be surveyed through DED's Business Retention and Expansion program to identify the strengths and challenges they face in utilizing technology. Currently over 400 key businesses are surveyed annually by the Department of Economic Development Statewide. To develop the statewide plan, over 1000 businesses will be surveyed as communities and regions have the capability to gather information from all types of businesses including retail, health care and services. The BR&E survey asks over 10 specific questions related to technology and broadband utilization. Additional questions will be developed that relate specifically to future opportunities. The data will be pulled together and themes will be developed.

4th Quarter 2010 Status Update: Businesses continued to be surveyed using DED's BR&E program. Data is being collected across the state. Sixteen communities currently hold a licenses to input data in eSynchronist; anticipate making additional licenses available in 1Q 2011. Implementation of a separate broadband survey will begin in 1Q 2011. A report of data collected during Fiscal year 2009 – 2010 is anticipated during 1Q 2011.

Inventory of Broadband and Digital Literacy Programs. In order to identify potential partners and to avoid duplication of efforts, an inventory of broadband and digital literacy programs will be conducted. Results will be shared with project partners, regional teams and be available on the broadband portal.

4th Quarter 2010 Status Update. Begin Quarter 2 2011.

Focused Surveys. Focused surveys in regions where there are large numbers of non-adopters will help to better understand how to increase broadband adoption. The surveys will be conducted in specific counties, regions and in some parts of metropolitan areas where usage appears to be lower will provide these areas with data specific to them that can be used to develop a plan that addresses their future needs. The surveys will also create local benchmark data that will help determine if broadband adoption increases in these areas over time.

4th Quarter 2010 Status Update. Begin development of surveys in Quarter 2, 2011.

Government and Economic Developer Survey. To gather information on access, adoption, usage, and technical assistance needs of all county and community governments, chambers of commerce, and for economic developers, a survey (web-based where feasible) of all entities will be conducted. This information will support the development of regional and community technology plans and will be used to develop targeted technical assistance for local governments and economic developers.

4th Quarter 2010 Status Update. Begin development of surveys in Quarter 3, 2011.

Follow-up Statewide Household Survey. A follow-up survey of Nebraska households will be conducted in the Spring of 2015 (Year 5 of grant) to document changes in Internet and broadband use since the 2010 survey (which was funded in the original proposal). Regions that were originally identified as either unserved or underserved in the initial survey will be over-sampled in this follow-up survey. This data will determine program success.

4th Quarter 2010 Status Update. Survey planned for Quarter 2 2014.

Creating Broadband Plan/Administrative – To meet the objectives of the grant, the broadband planning oversight team meets on a bi-monthly basis. Members of the planning oversight team continue to participate in the NTIA informational webinars, present findings at meetings regarding the planning process and communicate regularly with the Public Service Commission (PSC) on the project. There are funds in the grant to hire a project manager/coordinator to assist the planning team in creating a statewide plan. During the 1st quarter 2011, an individual will be hired to assist planning team in these efforts. The broadband planning oversight team meets on a bi-monthly basis. The initial meetings, beginning in September 2009, focused on the development of the household survey questions which allowed for the survey to be distributed in February 2010. The report findings were released in June 2010. Members of the planning oversight team continue to participate in the NTIA informational webinars, present findings at meetings regarding the planning process and communicate regularly with the Public Service Commission (PSC) on the project.

4th Quarter 2010 Status Update: The planning grant is on schedule and the proposed budget and activities are being followed. There are funds in the grant to hire a project manager/coordinator to assist the planning team in creating a statewide plan. The planning team outlined steps to achieve the objectives of the grant during the 4th Quarter 2010. During the 1st quarter 2011, we will hire an individual to assist planning team in these efforts.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Three cross-training efforts were identified in the Supplemental Application to bring to share ideas and address broadband adoption and utilization. These efforts outlined below are the Statewide Conference, Regional Workshops and Webinars.

Statewide Conference. The focus of a statewide conference focused on broadband adoption and utilization will bring together many industries including those working in economic development, telecommunications industry, education, state government, and local government personnel.

> *4th Quarter 2010 Status Update*:   The AIM Institute is providing leadership in this effort and the planning is moving forward. During this quarter:

- Developed draft logic model to guide conference planning
- Identified potential dates and locations for initial conference in Q4 2011.
- Conducted due diligence on potential conference locations
- Identified potential members to comprise the planning committee
- Identified preliminary list of potential speakers/

Regional Workshops. Regional workshops will be held to address specific issues related to an area on broadband adoption and utilization.

> *4th Quarter 2010 Status Update: Regional workshops will begin 2012.*

Webinars. Up to four webinars will be held each year to address broadband adoption and utilization. Topics may include how to set up community planning groups to sharing results of the various data collections, processes and best practices.

> *4th Quarter 2010 Status Update*:   Webinars will begin in 3rd Quarter 2011. One Webinar focused on the Internet Connectivity and Survey results was held in Quarter 3, 2010.

Best Practice Videos. One way to expand broadband adoption across Nebraska is to learn from communities, businesses and other organizations who are the early adopters and "get it." This project initiative will identify at least 20 examples of best practices throughout Nebraska and conduct video interviews with key players. These individuals will be asked to describe the essential elements of their success. Each interview will be edited and compiled onto the broadband portal resource from which other communities can learn.

> *4th Quarter 2010 Status Update*: Began development of criteria for selection of candidates to feature in videos.

Entrepreneur Development and Acceleration System (EDAS). Providing technical assistance to local economic development personnel on supporting entrepreneurs through the use of broadband technologies. Broadband access, adoption and usage are critical applications for Nebraska entrepreneurs to increase market availability. Using technology to create a share of the market base is a new way of doing economic development. Technology applications will provide a tool for local services and suppliers to access the world market allowing for global expansion of access to clients and customers. A part of the EDAS focus will be used to address how broadband can help strengthen entrepreneurs in the State. This project has the potential to be a model for other states as they develop entrepreneurs and the impact of broadband

> *4th Quarter 2010 Status Update*: Partnership between DED, the Gallup Organization, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Greater Omaha Chamber of

Commerce is in place. More than 30 mentors were identified for the EDAS program. Anticipate identification and selection of up to 300 entrepreneurs/businesses in 1Q 2011. Certification of mentors on core behavioral economic management principles to be held in March 2011 to begin EDAS program and entrepreneur mentorship.

Technical Assistance Expertize. The focus of this effort will be to provide technical assistance in the area of business and entrepreneurial , chambers of commerce and economic developers, local and county stakeholders will be provided statewide and regions to increase broadband adoption.

> *4th Quarter 2010 Status Update*: Technical assistance needs will be identified throughout data collection and planning process. Initial assistance needs will be identified in 3rd quarter 2011.

Broadband Portal Development - Develop a central broadband portal which will serve as a source of information on broadband efforts in Nebraska and technical assistance materials.

> *4th Quarter 2010 Status Update*: A draft site map was reviewed in Quarter 4 2010 and the domain name has been secured - broadband.ne.gov.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Regional Planning Teams. Regional planning teams will be formed to conduct regional assessments, prioritize opportunities, and develop strategies. Regional coaches will assist planning teams in conducting the development of plans.

> *4th Quarter Status Update*: Planning team members have shared information about the broadband planning opportunities with all of the regional groups. During the 4th quarter, UNL Extension administration identified Extension Educators to lead the regional efforts. In the first quarter of 2011, a train-the-trainer session will be held with the educators prior to the first Regional Forums.

Regional Forums. Regional forums will be conducted to present broadband mapping and mail survey results, to solicit feedback, and to kick off regional planning efforts. Project partners will work with regional planning teams to host forums to present broadband mapping data and mail survey results, to solicit feedback, and to kick off regional planning efforts.

> *4th Quarter Status Update:* Regional forums are scheduled. Marketing has begun with a press release and frequent communication to established regional groups. Dates for the forums are scheduled for:
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> - March 23 – Northeast - Norfolk - Learning Center
> - March 30 – Western Nebraska – Gering Civic Center
> - March 31 - North Central – Valentine - 4-H Building
> - April 6 – New Frontier – North Platte - Quality Inn Convention Center
> - April 7 – Southwest - McCook - Mid-Plains Enterprise Center
> - April 13 – Southeast - Lincoln - Embassy Suites
> - April 14 – Central – Minden - Opera House

- April 28 – Omaha - Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce

Community Planning - North/South Omaha. North and south Omaha were identified as a region/area through the survey of Nebraska households as underserved. The Aim Institute will be leading efforts in Omaha to address broadband adoption and utilization.

> *4th Quarter Status Update*: Identified preliminary list of community partners to engage in developing and implementing outreach efforts.

Community Planning - Cultural and Unserved Communities. We will form additional community or local planning teams in regions/areas identified through the survey of Nebraska households and broadband mapping data as underserved. As part of the planning process, additional data will be collected (identified in the building capacity section) and focus groups held. Coaches with specific knowledge of these regional areas will be added to work specifically with these areas to develop plans relevant to their situation regarding broadband adoption and availability.

> *4th Quarter Status Update*: Begin in Quarter 2 2011.

Focus Groups Seven to 10 focus groups will be held with anchor institutions and utility providers as well as populations with low usage rates to gain understanding into the barriers from their perspective.   Focus groups will also be held with businesses including farmers and ranchers.

> *4th Quarter Status Update*: The focus groups will be conducted by UNL after the analysis of the technology survey and initial results of business survey. Potential focus groups were identified during 4th Quarter 2010.

Community Sector Discussions.   Community Sector discussions will be held to further advance adoption of technology in specific industries such as business and entrepreneurs; chambers; agriculture and the health industry**.** The focus of each discussion will be to benchmark technology use across the specific sectors; set goals for improved technology; and develop a plan to achieve goals.

> *4th Quarter Status Update*: The community sector discussions will begin in 2012 and conducted by UNL.

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